

Message Text

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INFO OCT-01 ARA-10 ISO-00 ORM-02 PA-02 PRS-01 USIE-00

CIAE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 INRE-00 SSO-00 PM-04

NSC-05 SP-02 SS-15 NSCE-00 /051 R

DRAFTED BY HHEILSNIS/DHA

APPROVED BY ICHESLAW D/HA

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O 311358Z MAR 77

FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES IMMEDIATE

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: SHUM

SUBJECT: WASHINGTON POST ARTICLE ON DERIAN TRIP

ARTICLE ON DERIAN TRIP APPEARING IN MARCH 31 WASHINGTON POST
READS AS FOLLOWS:

QUOTE: CARTER AIDE IN ARGENTINA TO GAUGE RIGHTS IMPACT.
BY KAREN DEYOUNG, BUENOS AIRES MARCH 30.

PATRICIA DERIAN, THE NEW STATE DEPARTMENT HUMAN RIGHTS
COORDINATOR, BEGAN "UNOFFICIAL" TALKS WITH HUMAN RIGHTS
GROUPS, US EMBASSY STAFF AND ARGENTINE OFFICIALS ON CURRENT
CONDITIONS HERE AND THE REACTION TO PRESIDENT CARTER'S RIGHTS
POLICIES.

DERIAN, WHOSE APPOINTMENT MARCH 5 HAS NOT YET BEEN CONFIRMED
BY THE SENATE, ARRIVED MONDAY, WITH US-ARGENTINE RELATIONS
THE MOST STRAINED SINCE THE MILITARY JUNTA OUSTED FORMER
PRESIDENT ISABEL PERON A YEAR AGO.

THE ONE-STOP TRIP, SCHEDULED TO LAST UNTIL FRIDAY, INDICATES
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THAT CARTER PLANS TO USE THE RIGHTS JOB, AND DERIAN, AS AN
ACTIVE PART OF HIS HUMAN RIGHTSPOLICY. UNDER THE FORD ADMIN-
ISTRATION, THE OTHER HALF OF ITS MANDATE, AND WAS LESS
ACTIVE IN HUMAN RIGHTS. (SIC)

THE JUNTA HAS MADE NO OFFICIAL COMMENT ON DERIAN'S VISIT,
AND LOCAL PRESS MENTION HAS BEEN RESTRICTED TO AN ANNOUNCE-

MENT OF THE VISIT, WITHOUT INCLUDING DATES.

ACCORDING TO ONE HIGH-LEVEL OFFICIAL, HOWEVER, THE JUNTA HAS NO OBJECTION TO DERIAN'S VISIT, AND IN FACT "WELCOMES THE OPPORTUNITY FOR HER TO SEE WHAT ARGENTINA IS REALLY LIKE." THE OFFICIAL SAID DERIAN PROBABLY WILL MAKE CONTACT WITH THE FOREIGN MINISTRY, BUT WILL NOT SEE ANYONE OF CABINET LEVEL BECAUSE "SHE HASN'T ASKED TO:.

THE VISIT FOLLOWS EXTENSIVE US AND INTERNATIONAL CRITICISM OF THE JUNTA'S ALLEGED IMPRISONMENT AND TORTURE OF SUSPECTED SUBVERSIVE. EARLY THIS MONTH, CARTER PROPOSED HALVING US MILITARY AID TO ARGENTINA, ALONG WITH CUT TO ETHIOPIA AND URUGUAY, BECAUSE OF HUMAN RIGHTS CONCERNS. THE JUNTA ANGRILY REJECTED THE REMAINING \$15 MILLION AID PROPOSAL AND LABELED CARTER'S ACTION "INTERNATIONALIST" AND AN INSULT TO THE ARGENTINE PEOPLE.

A RECENT AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL REPORT WAS ALSO REJECTED BY THE JUNTA AS "HEARSAY EVIDENCE (THAT) LACKED VERACITY AND OBJECTIVITY." THE REPORT ALLEGED "GROSS VIOLATIONS" OF HUMAN RIGHTS AND CHARGED THAT THE JUNTA HAS DETAINED "5,000 TO 6,000 POLITICAL PRISONERS, THE MAJORITY OF WHICH HAVE NEITHER BEEN CHARGED NOR TRIED."

THE FACT THAT DERIAN'S TRIP COMES EVEN BEFORE CONFIRMATION IS EVIDENCE NOT ONLY OF CARTER'S CONTINUED HUMAN RIGHTS OFFENSIVE, BUT ALSO OF A SOMEWHAT DELICATE MEASURE-TAKING AMONG THE ADMINISTRATION, THE STATE DEPARTMENT AND UNCLASSIFIED

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COUNTRIES SINGLED OUT AS RIGHTS VIOLATORS.

ACCORDING TO SEVERAL SOURCES, THE IDEA FOR THE TRIP-NEVER FORMALLY ANNOUNCE-ORIGINATED BEFORE DERIAN'S NOMINATION WAS MADE PUBLIC, WITH A PERSONAL INVITATION FROM US AMBASSADOR ROBERT C. HILL.

THE INTENTION, ONE STATE DEPARTMENT SOURCE IN WASHINGTON SAID, WAS TO "BURDEN HER WITH THE TRUTH" ABOUT ARGENTINA, SEEN THROUGH THE EYES OF AMERICANS WHO LIVE HERE AND THE ARGENTINES THEMSELVES.

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MANY EMBASSY PERSONNEL FEEL UNJUSTLY MALIGNED BY THE US PRESS AND CONGRESSIONAL CRITICISM, PARTICULARLY RESENTING

THAT THE EMBASSY'S REPORT ON HUMAN RIGHTS IN ARGENTINA, RELEASED BY A HOUSE COMMITTEE JAN. 1, WAS LABELED IN SOME QUARTERS AS "TOO SOFT" ON THE JUNTA.

THEY ALSO JOIN MANY ARGENTINES, BOTH PRO-AND ANTI-JUNTA, IN FEELING THAT THE AID CUTOFF AND THE WAY IT WAS ANNOUNCED, WITH ARGENTINA SHARING THE NEGATIVE SPOTLIGHT WITH ETHIOPIA AND URUGUAY WHILE SOUTH KOREA AND THE PHILIPPINES WERE SPARED BECAUSE OF THEIR STRATEGIC IMPORTANCE, WAS HEAVY HANDED.

NIXON-APPOINTED HILL, IN AN INTERVIEW FILMED HERE LAST MONTH FOR COLUMNIST WILLIAM BUCKLEY'S "FIRING LINE" TELEVISION PROGRAM, SAID THE UNITED STATES SHOULD CONCERN ITSELF WITH ITS OWN PROBLEMS "BEFORE INTERFERING IN THE AFFAIRS OF OTHER NATIONS".

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ACCORDING TO EXTENSIVE PRESS ACCOUNTS HERE, HILL SAID HE DOES NOT LIKE "THE ROLE OF POLICEMAN" AND APPEALED FOR "RESPECT AND UNDERSTANDING, NOT SANCTIONS." HE ALSO CRITICIZED US JOURNALISTS ABROAD FOR "GIVING GREATER RELEVANCE TO THE BAD" NEWS.

WHEN DERIAN WAS NOMINATED AS HUMAN RIGHTS COORDINATOR, THE STATE DEPARTMENT SOURCE SAID, A LOT OF PEOPLE WERE "SCARED TO DEATH" THAT SHE WOULD BE A TOOL FOR RIGHTS ACTIVISTS. A FORMER DEPUTY IN THE CARTER-MONDALE CAMPAIGN DERIAN WAS AN OUTSPOKEN CIVIL RIGHTS ACTIVIST IN THE SOUTH.

HER INITIAL MEETING WITH THE EMBASSY STAFF YESTERDAY WAS CHARACTERIZED BY ONE MEMBER PRESENT AS "A MEETING BETWEEN ADVERSARIES" WHERE SHE "LAID IT ON THE LINE THAT SHE, AND CARTER, ARE VERY SERIOUS ABOUT WHAT THEY ARE DOING."

ONE MEMBER OF THE US MILITARY TEAM HERE, THE STAFFER SAID, NOTED THAT THE AID CUTOFF MADE IT DIFFICULT FOR THEM TO OPERATE AND ASKED WHAT DIRECTION MILITARY RELATIONS WITH ARGENTINA WERE GOING TO TAKE.

DERIAN REPORTEDLY REPLIED: "WELL, WE'RE NOT GOING TO BE SELLING THEM THUMBSCREWS ANY MORE, IF THAT'S WHAT YOU MEAN."

FOR ITS PART, THE JUNTA SAYS IT HAS NO INTENTION OF COMPLYING WITH THE STRONGEST US REQUEST THAT OF RELEASING THE NAMES OF ALL POLITICAL PRISONERS AND THOSE KILLED SINCE THE MILITARY JUNTA TOOK OVER. END QUOTE.

CHRISTOPHER

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: HUMAN RIGHTS, PRESS COMMENTS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 31-Mar-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: n/a
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment:
Disposition Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1977STATE071341
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: DHA
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D770110-0821
Format: TEL
From: STATE
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1977/newtext/t1977031/aaaaaawi.tel
Line Count: 171
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 888d07ac-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ORIGIN DHA
Original Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 4
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: n/a
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 20-Oct-2004 12:00:00 am
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 2933205
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: WASHINGTON POST ARTICLE ON DERIAN TRIP ARTICLE ON DERIAN TRIP APPEARING IN MARCH 31 WASHINGTON POST READS AS FOLLOWS
TAGS: SHUM, OVIP, US, AR, (DERIAN, PATRICIA)
To: BUENOS AIRES
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/888d07ac-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009